

“Why Some Christians Remain Carnal,” Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 – December 28th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part two of a new series we began two weeks ago, titled, “Why Some Christians Remain Carnal.”
- I reason I chose this title is because the Apostle Paul is deeming it necessary to hit head-on the many reasons for the Corinthians carnality.
- It seems the Holy Spirit is having Paul write them concerning not only their carnality but why it is that Christians will remain in their carnality.

- Here in lies the lesson of the passage namely, that of putting ones finger on the source of carnality so as to move to ones spiritual maturity.
- It's for this reason that Paul, by the Holy Spirit, ever so beautifully and brilliantly does exactly that by first identifying why they're still carnal.
- Then, by way of correction he seeks redirection, which we saw in verse 13, where they're carnality, meant they weren't rejected culturally.

1. They're not rejected culturally (Verse 13)

- Paul quotes another of their sayings, “food for the stomach and the stomach for food.” Paul then says; “God will destroy both of them.”
- They were saying this in order to connect the body's appetite for food with the appetite for sex saying that God has given us both drives.
- The thought was if God gave us an appetite for food that can be satisfied when hungry, so too can the appetite for sex be satisfied as well.

- Of course the problem with this is there's no moral equivalence between satisfying the appetite for food and satisfying the appetite for sex.
- However, that didn't stop them from using this as an excuse to feed their carnal lusts of the flesh under the banner of the saying of the day.
- Not much has changed 2000-years later, except the sayings now go something like, “how can something that feels so good be so wrong?”

2. They're not focused eternally (Verse 14)

- v14 Paul sort of reminds them that one day, God, by His power, is going to raise us from the dead, just as He raised Jesus from the dead.
- What Paul is saying is that one day; my body with all of its appetites will die, and or be resurrected, and as such, I should not focus on it.
- The point being is that my focus should not be on satisfying the appetites of this body in the temporal, but on that which is yet in the eternal.

3. They're not discerning spiritually (Verses 15-17)

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” 17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

- v15 Paul asks the fourth of six “don't you know” questions, this time asking, “Do you not know your bodies are members of Christ Himself.”
- He then takes it further asking, shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? He then answers saying, never!
- v16-17 is the fifth don't you know such that, he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body, as the two will become one flesh.

- I don't know if you've noticed this yet, but there is a progressive nature to the first three reasons as to why some Christians remain carnal.
- Let me explain, it starts with the pressure to acquiesce to the carnal culture of the day, and it's under the banner of being culturally relevant.
- That's not to say being culturally relevant in and of itself is a bad thing, rather, it is to say that conforming to it culturally traps us in carnality.

1 Peter 1:13–16 (NIV) — 13 Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Romans 12:1–2 (NIV) — 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- Actually, these two verses here in Romans chapter 12 sums up the first three reasons as to why it is that we as Christians remain carnal.
- Here's how I get there, we conform to the pattern of the world by way of the pressure from the world so as to not be rejected by the world.
- This then leads to our second and third reason, which is our minds aren't focused on God eternally, nor discerning of God's will spiritually.

- What's interesting is, as we'll Lord willing see next week Paul then talks about our bodies and in so doing, echoes verse one in Romans 12.
- Here's where I'm going with all of this, the world, the flesh, and the devil, all of which war against us as Christians, have this strategy down.
- So much so, the Christian is kept down in their carnality. They never grow up to spiritual maturity, and this is how it can and does happen.

- More specifically, we start off wanting the world to speak well of us, not reject us, which blurs our focus on the eternal destiny of all of us.
- Then, once we're out of focus eternally we're disabled when it comes to discernment spiritually, which in the end leads to one living sinfully.
- Then, when that happens, it's just a matter of time before we're justifying living sinfully in sexual immorality within and outside of marriage.

Warren Wiersbe, who I'm a huge fan of, said it best illustrating it this way, “Sex outside of marriage is like a man robbing a bank: he gets something, but it is not his and he will one day pay for it. Sex within marriage can be like a person putting money into a bank: there is safety, security, and he will collect dividends.”

Perhaps you've heard the illustration of sex before marriage likened unto two pieces of paper that are glued together becoming one, then when that premarital sexual relationship is put asunder, as it were, it's like tearing those two pieces of paper apart, only to find that they will never be the same again. This because, there are now holes in both papers, as well as remains of the other paper, not to mention the glue that still remains as well. So too is this true when two people become one flesh sexually. They will never be pure and holy, or if you prefer, whole again, as not only are there holes, but parts of them are now with another and visa versa along with the residual glue of a sinful union.

I'll close with a true story about Billy Sunday, the baseball evangelist who like the Apostle Paul, never spared himself nor those he wanted to help in the vigor of his attacks on sin, particularly sexual sin, such as our text today has addressed. Billy Sunday was known as a fiery preacher who thundered against sin and preached Christ as the only answer to man's needs until his death in 1935. He's quoted as saying, “I'm against sin.” “I'll kick it as long as I've got a foot, and I'll fight it as long as I've got a fist. I'll butt it as long as I've got a head. I'll bite it as long as I've got a tooth. When I'm old and fistless and footless and toothless, I'll gum it till I go home to Glory and it goes home to perdition.”